



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS WASP (LHD -1)
FPO AE 09556-1660

IN REPLY TO:

5700

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APR 18 2005

From: Commanding Officer, USS WASP (LHD 1)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), 805 Kidder Breese
Street, SE, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY, USS WASP (LHD 1), 2004 (OPNAV 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents

1. Per reference (a), USS WASP (LHD 1) Command History for 2004 has been compiled and is forwarded as enclosures (1) through (4).

Todd Miller

T. R. MILLER

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. **Mission.** USS WASP (LHD 1) is a multi-purpose amphibious assault ship whose primary mission is to embark, deploy, support and land elements of a Marine Landing Force in amphibious assault operations by helicopter, landing craft, amphibious vehicles, V/STOL or any combination of these methods. WASP has a secondary mission of sea control.

2. **Chain of Command.**

Administrative

COMNAVSURFLANT NORFOLK VA (UIC 53824)
RADM Terrance T. Etnyre, USN (1 Jan - 31 Dec)
COMPHIBGRU TWO (UIC 55333)
RADM Reubin B. Bookert, USN (1 Jan - 31 Dec)

Operational

COMSECONDFLT (UIC 08961)
VADM Gary Roughead, USN (1 Jan - Oct)
VADM Mark P. Fitzgerald, USN (Oct - 31 Dec)
COMPHIBGRU TWO (UIC 55333)
RADM Reubin B. Bookert, USN (1 Jan - 31 Dec)
COMPHIBRON FOUR (UIC 55336)
CAPT Steve C. Joachim, USN (1 Jan - 31 Dec)

3. **Commanding Officer.**

CAPT James E. Wise II, USN (1 Jan - 31 Dec)

4. **Embarked/Attached Commands and Detachments.**

COMPHIBRON FOUR (1 Jan - 18 Sep)
TACRON TWO TWO Det One (17 Feb - 18 Sep)
SPECWARGRU 2 LNE (17 Feb - 18 Sep)
FLTSURGTEAM EIGHT (17 Feb - 18 Sep)
EODMU SIX DET SIX (17 Feb - 18 Sep)
HELSUPRON EIGHT (17 Feb - 18 Sep)
ACU FOUR (1 Jan - 18 Sep)
BMU TWO (1 Jan - 18 Sep)
22 Marine Expeditionary Unit (17 Feb - 18 Sep)
Det, MLE
Det, 8th Communication Battalion (JTF Enabler)
Det, 2d Radio Battalion
Det, Interrogator/Translator Platoon
BLT 1/6
Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 266 (Reinforced)
Marine Service Support Group 22

5. Aircraft on board

4	AH-1
12	CH-46
8	MH-53E
2	SH-60S
3	UH-1H
6	AV-8
4	MV-22 Osprey

6. Homeport.

Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

7. Command Employment

JAN	Predeployment Standdown, INSURV, SOCEX
FEB-SEP	ESG2 Deployment
MAR	PHIBLEX, 22MEU Offload
APR-JUN	Operations Sea Dragon, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Mountain Storm
JUL	22MEU Onload
AUG	CART I
SEP	FEP, Post Deployment Standdown
OCT	Ammo Offload
NOV	V-22 Osprey Testing
DEC	Shipyard Prep

8. CY-04 Awards

01JAN - 31DEC	Second consecutive COMNAVSURFOR Blue "E" award for Logistics Excellence
01JAN - 31DEC	Maritime Warfare Excellence Award
17FEB - 18SEP	Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
01JAN - 31DEC	Green "H" Award for Medical Excellence

CHRONOLOGY

January 2004

07 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk for INSURV
08 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk Pier 10
12-21 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk for SOCEX in Onslow Bay, N.C.

February 2004

17 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk for deployment
18-19 Arrived at Onslow Bay, N.C., for marine onload
20-31 Transited the Atlantic Ocean
22 Conducted Leap Frog Exercises with WASP Strike Group

March 2004

01 Transited Strait of Gibraltar
04 Arrive Malta
04-07 Inport Malta
04 Held retirement ceremony/reception for General of
Maltese Armed Forces
05 Conducted COMREL at Dar il-Quab ta' Gesu
08 Departed Malta
11-12 Training exercise in Adriatic Sea with Albanian
Military
16 Transit Suez Canal
17-19 Transit Gulf of Suez/Red Sea
21-22 Transit Horn of Africa
23 Straits of Hormuz Transit
20-31 Anchored Umm Said Qatar
20-31 MEU offload

April 2004

1-3 Anchored Umm Said Qatar
1-3 MEU offload
04 Departed Umm Said Qatar
5-7 Moored Jebal Ali, U.A.E.
08 Departed Jebal Ali, U.A.E.
08 Straits of Hormuz transit
9-13 Ops Pasni Pakistan
17-22 Inport Port Victoria, Seychelles
22 Conducted COMREL at English River School in Victoria,
Seychelles
23 Departed Port Victoria, Seychelles
20-31 Ops vicinity Djibouti

May 2004

01-07 Ops vicinity Djibouti
08-09 Modloc Gulf of Aden
10-14 Enroute Mogadishu So
20-31 Modloc coast of Somalia

NARRATIVE

January 2004

USS WASP (LHD 1) began 2004 moored at Norfolk Naval Station, Norfolk, Va., during the winter holiday stand down. During stand down and the rest of the month, WASP's crew continued to make deployment preparations bringing on supplies and equipment. WASP also conducted its final INSURV inspection. From January 12-22, WASP got underway to participate in SOCEX in preparation for the upcoming deployment.

C5I successfully completed Board of Inspections and Surveys, INSURV, contributing to the scores of 80 for C4I and 84 for Combat Systems; provided flawless Communications, Sensors, and Navigation Systems support for SOCEX in support of MEU-22; and repaired three of four Demand Assigned Multiple Access Multiplexers. The department expanded over 150 man-hours running approximately 740 feet of Cat 5 cable, 10 feet of fiber cable, mounted five LAN outlets and configured and installed two ALCATEL Omni switches enabling immediate system operability for HELSUPPRON EIGHT in support of WASP - ESG 2 Deployment.

The chaplain department began conducting monthly "Life after Mast" classes for all restricted personnel to help them learn how attitude and life skills are essential to success.

In January, medical department scored 85 percent on INSURV. In addition, M-1 readiness status was achieved by an all out effort to provide hands-on training for WASP stretcher-bearers. The hard work culminated in WASP earning the coveted Green "H" award.

WASP was reorganized and prepared to support the ESG force. This evolution included the blood bank program for trauma receiving. All of these efforts resulted in a C1 status. In addition, WASP was chosen to lead the LHD class ships for the VITROS experimental laboratory program. The VITROS machine is a state-of-the-art chemistry analyzer being adapted for shipboard use. With augmented personnel, the medical presence (ships company, FST and MEV) onboard WASP increased to 13 Officers, 9 Chiefs and 50 Corpsman. TWASP provided superior clinical care for over 3000 embarked military members including 36 inpatient ICU admissions, Smallpox training and scarification, reengineering the mass casualty procedures by reorganizing the trauma bays to mimic a level two-trauma center with full medical capabilities and upgrading sick call procedures which decreased sick call waiting time by 80 percent.

WASP implemented an aggressive aviation indoctrination and training program for Marine Air Combat Element, Helicopter Support Squadron HMMH-461, and Navy Sear and Rescue detachment (HC-8) personnel during a shortened Inter-deployment Training Cycle and extended Arabian Gulf deployment. The Aviation

Training Team conducted over 25 flight deck and hangar bay drill scenarios, emphasizing flight deck and hangar bay safety, air traffic control procedures, and aircraft firefighting procedures.

February 2004

USS WASP leads Expeditionary Strike Group 2 (ESG 2) and is the flagship for the first-ever East Coast ESG, once again proving that WASP is "First in the Fleet." Deploying with two guided missile cruisers, USS Yorktown and USS Leyte Gulf; the guided missile destroyer USS McFaul; and the fast attack submarine USS Connecticut; in addition to the traditional amphibious ready group configuration of a dock landing ship USS Whidbey Island and amphibious transport ship USS Shreveport, the Navy's new ESG concept brings greater strike and defensive capabilities to the amphibious fleets.

WASP and the amphibious ships left Norfolk and headed to Onslow Bay, N.C., to pick up the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, before transiting the Atlantic headed for the 6th Fleet area of operations. In-chopping to 6th Fleet on Feb. 25, WASP and ESG 2 transited the Straits of Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean Sea Feb. 28.

The chaplain's department began promoting positive character qualities by developing and publicizing weekly "Character First" character qualities through pamphlets, POD notes, SITE TV, and the ship's web page as well as developed positive note information for bulletin boards.

March 2004

WASP made its first port visit in Valletta, Malta, March 4-7. The ship hosted a reception March 4 in honor of the retiring commander of the armed forces of Malta that included about 300 guests, including the U.S. ambassador to Malta, and dozens of diplomats from all over the world.

During the port visit the chaplains department coordinated a COMREL project at Dar il-Quab ta' Gesu, a shelter for battered women and children, in Malta where 27 volunteers painted and cleaned a shelter.

Only a few days back to sea, WASP and 22 MEU participated in PHIBLEX 04, an amphibious landing exercise with Albanian forces in the Adriatic Sea. This seven-day exercise helped improve relations between the two countries while improving the Marines amphibious assault and landing skills.

On 17 March, WASP transited the Suez Canal into the Northern Red Sea and the 5th Fleet area of operations. Continuing down to the Indian Ocean, WASP made its way into the Arabian Gulf, stopping in Doha, Qatar, to offload 22 MEU ground and support units.

WASP's participated in exercises Barbary Thunder and Adriatic Phiblex in addition to the Mediterranean and Suez Canal transits; established Black Cell Video capability through Global Broadcast System; and became the first amphibious ship to transfer Mission Data Units (MDUs) via EHF NECC in the FIFTHFLT AOR.

In Qatar, WASP prepared and issued 360 tons of ordnance in less than 24 hours to the MEU in support of Operation Mountain Storm in Afghanistan.

April 2004

WASP made its way into the Arabian Gulf, stopping in Doha, Qatar, to offload 22 MEU ground and support units.

Following the offload of the bulk of 22 MEU's ground Marines, WASP entered Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates April 5-8, for a liberty port visit before heading back south into the Indian Ocean. Just days later on April 11, 22 MEU's Air Combat Element, the "Fighting Griffins" of HMM-266, made one of the largest launches in history, offloading all their aircraft in only two days and flying the entire squadron into Afghanistan to support the global war on terrorism.

With 22 MEU in Afghanistan, WASP headed south past the equator in support of Operation Sea Dragon. The transit below the equator also gave Sailors the opportunity to participate in a crossing the line ceremony. The shellback ceremony is a time-honored naval tradition that few East Coast ships get the chance to do.

The ship paid a four-day port visit to Mahe, Seychelles, where Sailors again had the chance to relax and recharge April 19-22. As with all ports, Morale, Welfare and Recreation offered day tours to various historical sites, cities and water activities.

WASP Sailors participated in a community relations project at the English River School in Victoria, Seychelles, with 27 volunteers and conducted an Easter Sunrise Service for 58 Sailors.

WASP again went to sea to participate in Operation Sea Dragon from April to August, where her crew collected data about daily maritime activities in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. The information helped establish a working database, which the U.S. will use to help determine possible terrorist activities in the area. As the flagship, WASP provided command and control and information, in turn supporting more than 240 vessel boardings.

While underway, WASP held six burials at sea.

WASP became the first amphibious ship to establish IP connectivity via Extremely High Frequency (EHF) Medium Data Rate (MDR).

From April to June, WASP supported U.S. Army/U.S. Navy Seal quick reaction force by providing range safety officers and shipboard range resources for more than 10 different range dates.

May 2004

WASP remained at sea throughout May, patrolling the coast of Africa participating in Operation Sea Dragon. During that time, WASP provided technical assistance to FS Charles De Gall for their OE-82D UHF SATCOM antennae system and USS KEARSARGE for their AN/WSC-6 SHF SATCOM System.

June 2004

WASP made a port visit beginning June 21 to Jebel Ali, U.A.E., after 60 consecutive days at sea. The port visit was a welcomed change of pace for Sailors and many took advantage of the time off. Stopping in Jebel Ali for the second time this deployment, Sailors were able to participate in tours they couldn't catch the first time around. In addition, the ship received much-needed repairs to the flight deck and the refrigeration units.

WASP coordinated and conducted the first family Video-teleconference (VTC) between ship's company, embarked commands, and family member's ashore, significantly enhancing crew morale.

July 2004

In late July, HMM-266's Fighting Griffins returned to WASP after nearly four months operating in Afghanistan against elements of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Once the ACE was on board, WASP headed back up into the Persian Gulf to Kuwait to backload the rest of 22 MEU.

WASP was again able to provided technical assistance to USS KEARSARGE for S-TADIL-J and technical assistance to USS RAMAGE for CDLMS.

The chaplains department conducted an end-of-deployment two-session marriage seminar for 73 personnel and a three-session parenting seminar for 45.

August 2004

The Marines were welcomed back on board WASP Aug. 6-10 when WASP pulled pierside in Ashshuaibih, Kuwait. WASP supported the MEU back load from Operation Mountain Storm by inventorying, packaging, segregating and on loading 70 short tons of ordnance in Kuwait. During the back load WASP brought on 92 pieces of rolling stock, which included the LAV 25, 7 ton MTRV's, IFV's, and HMMWV's.

Five distinguished officers from the Republic of Korean Navy Ship Kwanggaeto (DD 971), in port at the same time, were able to spend an afternoon touring WASP with the XO and two Korean-speaking Sailors.

While deployed to the 5th Fleet area of operations, WASP participated as flagship in four major operations in support of the global war on terrorism.

With the Marines back on board, WASP began its trek home. Transiting the Suez Canal on August 20 marked the end of successful operations in 5th Fleet. The only thing left for Sailors and Marines was a liberty port visit to Taragonna, Spain, Aug. 25-29, and an agricultural wash down in Rota, Spain, from Aug. 31 to Sep. 7. Both ports gave everyone an opportunity to see the country and prepare for the 12-day voyage back to the United States.

September 2004

During the September port visit to Rota, Spain, 40 volunteers participated in a COMREL project at the Seniora Del Carmen, a local church helping paint and restore the building. On Sept. 15 WASP reached the coast of North Carolina, home of the 22nd MEU. Marines offloaded their equipment, vehicles and aircraft as they headed home after a seven-month deployment. As the ship emptied out, Sailors began preparing for a new crew. Family members and friends were permitted to ride the ship back to Norfolk from North Carolina as part of a Tiger Cruise, which many ships offer after a deployment. Tigers were able to experience shipboard life and tour the ship. Finally arriving in Norfolk September 18, WASP and her crew were welcomed at Naval Station Norfolk to a warm reception of family and friends anxious to see their loved ones.

Operationally, WASP issued 839,721 gallons of JP-5 and over 28,000 pounds of ordnance to aviation assets. Combat cargo and flight deck crews affected the air transfer of 12,862 personnel and 2,846 pallets of internally carried mail and stores. Additionally, 2,164 pallets of food, stores, and parts were transferred via vertical replenishment. Flight deck and hangar bay personnel conducted 3,673 aircraft moves and 1,608 elevator evolutions without any major incidents. During the weapons on-load, WASP on loaded more than 2,000 tons of ordnance with perfect accountability and without mishap.

WASP's weapons division maintained over 300 AWSEP items and associated programs, 120 small arms, 56 crew served weapons, 38 Night Vision Devices (NVD's), 12 magazines, 24 Ready Service Lockers (RSL's), 13 sprinkler groups, and over 1.8 million ordnance items from 5 USN/USMC accounts, valued at over 250 million dollars. Additionally, WASP received, transferred, and stored 524 AK-47's, 6 RPK's, 2 .50 caliber machine guns, and 10,000 rounds of ammunition in support of the Global War on Terrorism during Operation Sea Dragon. Command Aviation Ordnancemen and Gunner's Mates provided quality small arms and crew served weapons training to embarked Army, Navy and Marine Corps Special Forces. Embarked personnel expended over 50,500 rounds of ammunition and issued over 414,000 pounds of ordnance in support of joint operations in Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. WASP and 22 MEU also conducted a major off load of

ordnance in Qatar, executing a 12-hour movement plan of more than 206 tons of ordnance, 350 lifts, and over 50 thousand line items critical to Operation Mountain Storm.

While conducting joint operations, WASP maintained a SAR Alert in support of flight operations on the French Nuclear Carrier Charles De Gaulle and conducted personnel transfers with FS AS-365 Dauphin helicopters.

WASP's air department personnel performed over 11,200 man-hours of rehabilitation and corrective maintenance on 5,000 square feet of hangar bay bulkhead, saving the Navy over \$250,000 in repair costs. V-1 Division personnel also coordinated and scheduled the resurfacing of 14,000 square feet of failing non-skid on the flight deck. These repairs were performed overseas in the United Arab Emirates, at Port Jebel Ali. Preservation was also performed on 100,000 square feet of Island superstructure, saving an additional \$325,000 in government funding. In all, over 27,560 man-hours were dedicated to spotting aircraft in support of Marine Air Combat Element (ACE) and SAR detachment aircraft maintenance.

October 2004

In mid-October, WASP headed North to Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J., for an ammunition offload. During that time, Sailors were able to bring their motorcycles on board for a short command sponsored road trip through New Jersey and New York.

From October to December, WASP participated in the first ATG Link exercise in over 14 months, completing all checks and set the standard for participating units.

November 2004

From NWS Earle, WASP made its way down to Mayport, Fla., for its final liberty port of the year.

WASP departed NAVSTA Norfolk to participate in the final phase of fleet acceptance testing for the V-22 Osprey aircraft November 12. The crew helped complete 32 hours of tilt-rotor operations, including four nighttime hours and 196 landings in support of wind envelope expansion, dynamic interface testing, and short take-off validation.

C5I provided V-22 Squadron communications and COMSEC support for MV-22 OSPREY testing, contributing to successful data collection and evaluation enabling future deployment of the aircraft to the fleet and participated in HF Mobile Communications Network (HF MCN) receiving and processed over 26 emergency action messages.

The chaplain department coordinated COMREL projects with "Project Help" in Norfolk, Va., involving more than 150 sailors.

December 2004

From 6-17 December WASP passed a bi-annual surprise Disbursing audit by the Fleet Examination Group (formal report is pending with final grades).

The chaplain department coordinated with Union Mission to provide assistance to sort and distribute over 500 food baskets for the needy and organized Holiday Assistance program to help 60 WASP families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Over 200 sailors participated.